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ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

They mostly hunt small game, and are adept in the use of traps, snares and dogs. At the time of these investigations there were six guns in the village; and occasionally their owners went out shooting. Similarly, fishing is done by very few people, mostly by some young Muslim men. They do not use fishing nets and traps, and practically the only method employed by them for catching the fish is that of using the rod, hook and bait. The large tank in the vicinity of the village could afford a good supply of fish, but the absence of the fishing caste in the village population leaves this possibility almost unexplored. Fishermen from the neighbouring villages, however, periodically come to the tank.

The surroundings of Shamirpet offer very few opportunities for the collection of wild food. Around the village there are not many fruit-bearing trees. Mango and *jamun* (rose apple, *Eugenia jambolana*) fruits are mostly eaten while they are still unripe by the village boys. Parties of children and young people periodically go to pick wild berries when they are in season. These are mostly eaten on the spot. When wild figs are ripe children collect and eat them. Another item of food eagerly sought by everyone is the *chikur*—tender tamarind leaves. These leaves are curried, as well as pickled and preserved. Honey is collected by some men of lower castes and inferior social status, whenever they can spot a comb. Medicinal herbs, roots, tubers and barks are collected according to need.

Utilization of forest resources is not open to everyone now. From the surrounding scrub jungle villagers can collect only a limited quantity of fuel, as this—as well as getting timber—is regulated by the Forest Department of the government, and permits can be obtained only by making scheduled payments.

Different kinds of coloured earth used in washing walls and decorating the interiors of homes, as well as the ordinary requirements for the construction of houses, can be freely collected by the people. The Vaddars can break and shape stones without having to pay for them.

6. NON-AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS

In an effort to explain the broad outlines of the economic organization of the community, the traditional occupations and functions of the different castes have already been described. With reference to the inter-relations between the agriculturists

LEVELS OF LIVING

Caste is an important and rigid determinant of division of labour. Under this system several occupations have been preserved as caste monopolies, while some are 'open' and may be adopted by persons belonging to all castes. This system of division of labour by occupation has been examined at some length in Chapter III.

The factors of sex, age and social status govern the division of labour in nearly all types of work in the community. First, 'masculine' and 'feminine' pursuits are clearly distinguished: a woman doing man's work is laughed at; a man undertaking any specifically feminine tasks provides a favourite theme for popular gossip. Household work, agricultural activities, traditional craft or occupation of the family, and socio-religious rites and ceremonies are all marked by division of work on the basis of sex.

The age factor is equally important, but not so rigid. Six basic age divisions are recognized in the society: (i) 'Infant' from birth to weaning. (ii) 'Child' from weaning to about twelve. (iii) 'Grown-up boys or girls' from twelve until marriage or even a year or two later. (iv) 'Grown-up people' from twenty to about thirty-eight. (v) Middle-aged from about thirty-eight to fifty. (vi) 'Aged', over fifty. Each of these age divisions carries with it a more or less recognized status which determines the nature and quantity of work to be done by the individual in question. Only in the lower strata of the community we find the 'child' burdened with a regular share in domestic and occupational tasks. The children in the families on upper levels may occasionally do odd bits of work, but no responsibility is thrust on them. As they grow up, girls have to take an increasing interest in domestic tasks. 'Grown-up boys and girls' must seriously start 'learning to do things', and are gradually entrusted with some responsibility. However, it is on the 'grown-up people' that the main responsibility of 'doing all the work' and running the affairs of the household rests. The 'middle-aged' people continue to do a part of the practical work; but their time is more occupied by planning, direction and supervision. Depending on their age and personality, the 'aged' continue to supervise and direct the work of the younger members. As they grow older they content themselves merely by giving suggestions and eventually retire from active work or its planning, and devote their time mostly to their grandchildren.

Considerations of general social status also determine the nature

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the Erkalas, the men occupy themselves with hunting and trapping, while women weave mats and seek some additional income by fortune-telling. Among the Madigas males deal with dead animals; women come into the picture only when the meat has to be carried home and cooked. Both men and women may work at curing hides. Shoe-making and other leather-work is mainly done by men. On ritual and ceremonial occasions, musical instruments are played only by Madiga men.

Earlier it has been pointed out that men avoid tasks which are generally known as 'feminine'; and women in their turn are expected not to undertake pursuits which are traditionally regarded as 'masculine'. It is true that during the illness or absence of his wife, a man has to perform some of her domestic duties, but that is obviously a compromise with necessity. Any man taking undue interest in feminine tasks soon earns the unenviable epithet of 'half-woman', and is exposed to the ridicule of the community. Asking a man to do some feminine work would be almost tantamount to questioning his masculinity. 'Put bangles on your wrist, husk the paddy and cook the meals', is a remark often used in reproach to admonish those who lack manly qualities and courage. A woman going out of her way to do anything which is regarded as 'man's work' is noticed and adversely commented upon by the society. It is unthinkable that a woman can handle the plough. It should be pointed out here that sometimes a woman deliberately undertakes to do masculine work to 'bring home' to the husband the realization that he is not fulfilling his manly obligations and thus to awaken him to his proper responsibilities. Middle-aged women and widows can do some men's work without social censure.

Reference has been made to the six basic age divisions recognized in the community. Among the 'rich' and the 'well-to-do' families children do very little; but among the 'average' and the 'poor' they have to help the parents. Grazing the cattle, assisting parents in their work in the fields during the busy season, looking after younger siblings, and running errands are regarded as children's work. The girls have to help their mother in the kitchen. As they grow up their share in work gradually increases. Boys take more interest in 'outdoor' work, whilst girls are absorbed in the domestic routine. During this stage of life the 'grown-up boys and girls' even of rich and well-to-do families have to apply

LIVING TOGETHER

515 Sponging children with warm water is now often replaced by two or three cold baths per week; the frequency being more among the Brahmins and Komtis and less among the Muslims and the
861 untouchables. The elders practise considerable deception in their dealings with the children. Efforts at disciplining them tend to be rather erratic; and extremes of affection and strictures are by no means uncommon. Jealousies between siblings may be induced by members of the family who take delight in watching the irritation, anger and aggressiveness of little children. Tantrums during this stage are frequent. The methods commonly employed to pacify the child are: distracting it by making funny noises, rocking it in a cradle, offering it food or milk, scolding it loudly, threatening it, and finally boxing its ears and spanking it.

855 Later childhood begins at about five and continues until the advent of adolescence. At this stage the children form their own
[857] play-groups; spending several hours of the day in their respective age-groups. Now they are free to play in the streets and the open
[866] ground outside the village. Maternal attention is now considerably reduced; the elders keep an eye on them, but apart from this they have considerable freedom. As they grow older solicitation of affectionate responses through handling, play and fondling gradu-
[863] ally diminishes. Toilet training becomes strict, and the child is expected to have full control over defecation and urination. Cleanliness is insisted upon, and any failure on his part in this respect arouses anger in the elders. The erring child is ridiculed,
[864] chastised and punished. Now they must wear clothes and begin to learn to hide their genitals. If the elders find their organs exposed they point to them and ask, '*Arre*, what is that? Why are you exhibiting that little thing?' Children often develop a sense of shame at this stage, blush at such remarks, hide their organs and
861 run away from the elders. Discipline becomes more rigorous and physical punishment is more frequent. Rewards for good behaviour include praise, partiality and favoured treatment on the part of the parents, larger share of food and small gifts of money. Punishments, on the other hand, include rebukes and threats, ridicule, threats to report the matter to the father, spanking and occasionally denial of food or playing things or even locking up in a solitary room. Considerable dishonesty is practised by elders in their dealings with children, which is often detected by the latter and angers them all the more.

latter and angers them all the more. The play-groups cut across the boundaries of family and caste and include boys and girls from different castes. This necessitates the giving of instruction to them by the elders, who explain the hierarchy of the caste system and indicate clearly the groups among whom participation in eating on a basis of equality is permitted. Rules of inter-dining and untouchability are enforced at the age of six or seven; although until the age of adolescence their breaches are not very strictly punished. At the age of six or seven boys and girls come to have their separate play-groups, although their occasional playing together is not prohibited. Sex knowledge and sex experience of the children widens considerably, partly through secretly watching and imitating the elders, partly through oral instruction by older members of the play-group. Masturbation is now stealthily practised. Elders do not take an indulgent view if they find grown-up boys manipulating and rubbing their penes. Ridicule and threats are often employed to cure the habit. The threats commonly given are: 'If you persist in this habit your organ will not grow'; or that 'It will become crooked and you will be useless.' Threats of exposure cause great shame among the boys. Nevertheless, knowledge acquired from older and more experienced members of the age-group indicates that 'the penis grows larger by the practice of masturbation', 'maturity is arrived at earlier' and 'boys not doing it are not tough—they are half-girls', and consequently boys continue to masturbate secretly. A small group of boys may occasionally have a session of joint masturbation. Mutual masturbation is known, though it is less frequent. Similarly, little boys lie down together and imitate the coital act, although this does not involve actual anal penetration. Homosexuality is said to be confined to young people and boys with urban contacts; but we have reason to believe that it is practised on a limited scale by others also. However, it is confined only to pre-adolescent and adolescent groups. A boy persuades a smaller boy to lie down with him, and just rubs his organ at his anus—only in very rare cases is any anal penetration effected. A popular game with the boys is to make a female figure in dust and play at copulation. In the three instances observed by us the imitation was perfect, and resembled normal coitus in all its essentials. Boys and girls play at marriage, which in a few cases culminates in the act of 'sleeping together'. In most cases this is just lying together and no more; in a few it reaches the

point of rubbing genital organs. Girls masturbate either by pressing and releasing their clitoris with their fingers or by rubbing their thighs. Obscenity and talk about sex are disapproved by the elders, but the boys regard it as a mark of toughness and as an indication of their grown-up status, and as such indulge in it fairly regularly. Their vocabulary of abuse includes all the major sexual words, and they can often be heard abusing each other in terms such as: 'Copulate with your mother', 'Cohabit with your sister', 'My penis!'—or the rather curious 'Your mother's penis'.

Most children's games involve competition in the use of skills and stamina. The children are divided into several groups and factions, and these often come into conflict on account of intense jealousies and rivalries. Elaborate group *mores* and codes of ethics govern their inter-relations during states of friendship, neutrality and enmity. Toughness in boys is the admired quality; weakness, refined ways, spying and complaining coming in for criticism and ridicule. Running away from fright, crying and treachery to the group are remembered long after the quarrels and restoration of peace between conflicting factions. Outside the play-group the growing children have to lend a helping hand to their parents. Grown-up girls assist their mothers at their domestic tasks and take partial charge of their younger siblings, while boys do odd jobs for the father and other older male relatives. It is now time that they should take their first steps in preparing for adult life.

Adolescence brings about a significant change in the life of both boys and girls. By this age girls are expected to become proficient in all the major domestic tasks. Negotiations for their marriage are invariably started at this age. They grow up faster than the boys. While boys of a comparable age are still regarded as 'grown-up children who do not understand', girls come to be looked upon more or less as fully-grown women. Now they must be careful about their dress; particularly their breasts should never be exposed. They should 'not run about the village like boys', nor should they talk or laugh so loudly as to attract notice. Mothers advise them to be cautious in their behaviour, for this is the age when young people start giving attention to them. Young people have a special fascination for adolescent girls 'whose youth is just beginning to blossom'. Young men succeeding in fondling 'the unripe, half-developed breasts' of a girl and in having intercourse with one 'whose pubic hair is just beginning to grow' easily win the